

## Editorial: Media and Promotional Society

According to many sociological scientists (e.g. Bourdieu, Featherstone, Graham, Lury, Wernick), contemporary society is 'promotional society'. The range of cultural phenomena produces a promotional message. In other words, all sorts of text (e.g., university prospectuses, different types of reports such as the annual reports of companies) which may be primarily doing other things (e.g., informing) are nowadays simultaneously promoting. A promoting message is one which simultaneously represents (moves in place of), advocates (moves on behalf of), and anticipates (moves ahead of) whatever it is to which it refers.

This view of the promoting message as simultaneously representing and advocating makes sense of the pervasive implicit value content of factual statements and the calculated selection of factual statements for the value they evoke. But this also points to another widespread feature of contemporary texts: the blurring of the distinction between statements of fact and predictions.

Present-day media, in addition to other functions they may have (informing, entertainment), constantly promote. This co-presence of promotion with other functions can be examined in detail by analyzing different media. Therefore, the main objective of this publication is to show how contemporary media texts incorporate different promotional messages. Researches published in this journal are interdisciplinary and integrate sociology, media and political studies.

In her article Karmen Erjavec tries to find an answer to the question how the Slovenian daily newspapers reported the polls results during the decision-making process for the referendum on accession to NATO. She finds that the journalists of Slovenian daily newspapers *Delo*, *Dnevnik* and *Večer* presented the message of the polls regarding the admission of Slovenia to NATO in a competitive frame, or in other words, they channeled all the attention towards the search for the answer to the question of which side is taking the lead in the referendum campaign. *Mladina* and *Mag* partially covered the referendum campaign in a strategic frame. They added to the competitive frame by searching for the answer to the question of which strategy was chosen by the winning or the losing side. At the end of her article, the author claims that the strategic frame of the coverage of political campaigns leads to media coverage of political campaigns, in which case form is more important than content;

furthermore, it leads to the industry of media events and to the oversimplification of the journalistic story.

Marko Milosavljevič analyses the nature and origins of hidden, covert advertising and its presence in the Slovenian mass media. To outline the specificity of covert advertising in relation to news content and so-called hybrid messages, this paper defines the elements that are specific for covert advertising. It is argued, on the basis of the relevant legal and self-regulatory framework, that covert advertising is unethical, but also illegal, and is a consequence of the specific, market-driven approach to the media, an approach that has been dominant in the last fifty years. This approach is dominant also in the Slovenian media. The Western democracies have at the same time also developed a new phase in advertising, called responsible advertising. However, this type of advertising is not dominant in the Slovenian media, as there are numerous cases of covert advertising, breaches of law and other unethical and illegal practices in media and advertising. This suggests that the Slovenian mass media have become commercial, market-driven and advertising-driven; however they have not become also transparent and responsible when it comes to its functioning and advertising.

Melita Poler Kovačič's article is based on the assumption that we live in the increasingly promotional times. In order to achieve their goal, and that is public legitimacy, institutions and individuals are attempting to communicate their messages using the journalistic discourse. Studying the media access is very important if we want to understand the role and the power of mass media in the society. The authors' thesis is that the increasing routinization of the journalism, owing to the harsh economic climate of the media organizations in the circumstances of tough struggle for profits or even survival, encourages publishing the information of elite official sources, prepared by their media relations officials. The sources of this information are often not transparent in the journalistic texts, even though this practice is identified as unethical in the codes of both professions. The interweaving of public relations and journalism has serious consequences for the realization of the classical mission of journalism as a social activity for the common public welfare.

Vesna Laban's content analysis of television news reporting and its comparison with the information that reaches the editorial office, reveals a large amount of totally non-transparent sources of information. These are mostly press releases and other texts produced by public relations agencies and practitioners. This information, obtained through entirely routine channels, are perfectly composed and they most often reach the public unchanged. The most frequently used and most transparent sources in journalistic texts are the "real" official sources – representatives of social, economic and political power and

authority. Therefore, information is no longer a right, but a privilege, and this has negative consequences not only for journalism as a profession, but on all society.

Metka Kuhar's interdisciplinary sociological and communication research among young people in Slovenia tries to find which factors influence girls' body images most significantly. The research findings show that girls feel strong media pressures. The media ideal images are perceived as extremely thin; on average they are perceived as thinner than their own ideals. Their own ideals are stricter than the perceived boys' ideals of a woman's body. The perceived boys' ideals influence the girls' body images statistically less significantly than the perceived media ideals. The girls think that the perceived boys' ideals are not as strict as the media ideals. It follows that the girls worry primarily because of media pressures.

In her article, Tanja Kamin suggests that public health authorities together with the mass media play a central role in constituting the identity of a 'healthy' citizen, which is closely linked to an idea of a good consumer – a consumer who is familiar with his/her private interests, consumer rights as well as obligations, and who is aware of the risks and gains of his/her consumption choices. The author demonstrates the trend in shaping the health risk agenda in Slovenia, the rise of mediatized health communication and its discursive consequences. Her research covered the data from a descriptive quantitative study of 472 health communications between the gaining of Slovenia's independence in 1991 and the year 2003; the research included also in-depth interviews with the main actors in health promotion activities in Slovenia.

Karmen Erjavec